



WOM

to Shenandoah National Park
and Wildflower Weekend

Take a day or two to appreciate the diversity of wildflowers growing here in the Blue Ridge. More than 1,300 species of plants thrive in Shenandoah National Park, a mountain island surrounded by farmland, towns, and expanding developed areas. The park is a haven for native woodland wildflowers.

Here you can take time to observe. See how flowers rely on butterflies, bees, birds, and other animals to pollinate them and spread their seeds. Watch the daily battles taking place over a plant's resources.

Contemplate a wildflower and you might discover your own connections to the natural world.

"What a desolate place would be a world
without a flower! It would be a face without
a smile, a feast without a welcome."

– A.J. Balfour

Help to ensure that wildflowers will be around for generations by leaving them unharmed. A flower that is picked can miss a chance to spread thousands of seeds. A plant that is dug up is gone forever, and the loss affects all things connected to it. *If you love em, leave em!*



Meet Our Volunteers

Tom Dierauf of Albemarle County is a retired forester with the Virginia Department of Forestry. He has enjoyed hiking, backcountry camping, fishing and discovering wildflowers in Shenandoah National Park for more than 40 years. The Mill Prong Trail is one of his favorites, he says, because some of the plants there are hard to find in other areas of the park. On his hikes, Tom shares a keen knowledge of wildflowers and forest habitats, and an understated passion for conservation.

Diane Holsinger of Rockingham County has led many Wildflower Weekend walks for us over the years. An avid birder and wildflower enthusiast, she is a member of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Rockingham Bird Club, and Mycological Association of Washington, D.C. She conducts bird surveys for the Smithsonian Institution, and is a section leader for the park's annual butterfly and bird counts. Diane's most recent birding expeditions have taken her to Namibia, Botswana, and Zambia.

Betty Rosson of Rockingham County has had a life-long interest in nature. After raising her family, she obtained a degree in natural resource management. She is a member of the Rockingham Bird Club, Mycological Association of Washington, D.C., and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, and is past president of the Virginia Native Plant Society. She developed a butterfly garden for James Madison University. Betty worked as a seasonal biologist for Shenandoah National Park, and has volunteered as a naturalist for various conservation organizations.



Wildflower Weekend

is sponsored by Shenandoah National Park, the Shenandoah National Park Association, and ARAMARK, the official park concessioner.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Shenandoah National Park



May 13-14, 2006





SATURDAY, MAY 13

Birds and Blossoms of Pocosin

8:30 to 10:30 a.m.
Celebrate the return of migrating songbirds to Shenandoah on this gentle hike. Look and listen for scarlet tanagers, cerulean warblers, redstarts, and many more as you identify wildflowers along the fire road to the ruins of Pocosin Mission. 2 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft. Meet at Pocosin parking area (mile 59.5, **unmarked**, east side of Skyline Drive). **Limited parking.**
Diane Holsinger, Volunteer Naturalist

Marvelous Millers Head

9:30 a.m. to noon
Hike down a rocky ridge to the observation platform at Millers Head (elev. 3,465 ft.), and a wonderful view of the Shenandoah Valley. On this granitic rock formation you may find some uncommon plants that don’t grow on most Central District trails that are underlain by basalt. Steep uphill return. 1.6 miles. Total climb: about 450 ft. Meet at Millers Head trailhead: from Skyline Drive, turn into south entrance to Skyland (mile 42.5), pass stables and keep to left when road forks; park at top of hill.
Nick Fisichelli, Lead Botany Technician, Shenandoah National Park

Wildflower Identification for Beginners

10 to 11:30 a.m.
If wildflowers are casual acquaintances that you’d like to get to know better, this program’s for you. Learn characteristics of some flower families and key out flowers using a field guide. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8) for a slow-paced stroll.
Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

Bugs and Blooms

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Children’s program. (Repeats at 2 p.m.)
Through fun-filled activities, discover how plants and insects rely on each other in the Big Meadow. ½ mile. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).
Mathew Klozik, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park



*Spring Birds

12:30 to 2 p.m.
The high mountain springs here (elev. 2,665 ft.) served local residents and travelers crossing the Blue Ridge years ago. Now the wetland forest habitat attracts various species of birds. See who’s flitting and singing around the springs on this gentle walk. Meet at Gravel Springs parking area in the park’s North District (mile 17.6). **Limited parking.**
Alan Williams, Ecologist/Data Manager, Shenandoah National Park

Wonders of the Mill Prong

1 to 3:30 p.m.
Changes in elevation, aspect and forest type make this a reliable trail for a variety of wildflowers. The Mill Prong, one of the headstreams of the Rapidan River, joins the trail partway down, splashing its way to President Hoover’s former fishing retreat, Rapidan Camp. Steep in places; three small stream crossings. 4.1 miles. Total climb: about 870 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).
Tom Dierauf, Volunteer Naturalist

Bugs and Blooms

2 to 3:30 p.m. Children’s program. (See description of 11 a.m. program.)

Lewis Mountain Stroll

4:30 to 6 p.m. (Repeats on Sunday)
Look for woodland marvels such as jack-in-the-pulpit, blue cohosh and wood betony on this short hike southward along the Appalachian Trail. Stretch your legs on this easy walk. ½ mile. Meet at Lewis Mountain Picnic Area (mile 57.5).
Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

SUNDAY, MAY 14

*Birding at Beahms Gap

8:30 to 10:30 a.m.
Watch and listen for various species of birds attracted to the diverse habitat here. On the east side of Skyline Drive is a rich, young forest that’s still changing over from pastureland. The west side has more mature oak trees and less understory. A seepage area is an added attraction. Meet at Beahms Gap Overlook, in the park’s North District (mile 28.5) for a gentle walk.
Alan Williams, Ecologist/Data Manager, Shenandoah National Park

South River Falls Hike

9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Violets, wild geraniums, phacelias, and many more wildflowers greet hikers on this delightful trail to a waterfall view-point. There could be a surprise around every switchback of this strenuous but lovely hike. 3.3 miles. Total climb: about 910 ft. Meet at trailhead in South River Picnic Area (mile 62.8). Bring snack or lunch.
Betty Rosson, Volunteer Naturalist



*Appalachian Trail Discovery Hike

10 a.m. to noon
Discover what’s blooming on a gentle section of the Appalachian Trail, as we follow it northward from Milam Gap to Lewis Spring. Find out some of the fascinating history of the famous 2,174-mile hiking trail along the way. Ride van back to cars. 1.5 miles. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).
Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park



Gravel Springs-Bluff Trail Walk

1 to 3:30 p.m.
By popular demand, extra time has been added to the hike this year! Join our park botanist for a gentle walk designed for beginner wildflower enthusiasts. After a brief introduction to botany basics, explore the spring area, then hike along part of the Bluff Trail. 2 miles. Total climb: about 200 ft. Meet at Gravel Springs Gap (mile 17.6) in the park’s North District. **Limited parking.**
Wendy Cass, Botanist, Shenandoah National Park

*Butterflies in the Meadow

2 to 3:30 p.m.
What’s the difference between a spring azure and a pearl crescent? Learn some butterfly identification basics, then take a stroll in the Big Meadows area in search of Shenandoah’s early-season butterflies. Along the way, discover how particular butterfly species depend on certain native flowers to survive. Bring binoculars, if you have them. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center, Milepost 51.
Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

Wildflowers "On the Rocks"

2 to 4 p.m.
Walk through ancient lava flows and volcanic ash deposits, now wearing mossy coats, along the Appalachian Trail from Timber Hollow to Crescent Rock Overlook. This is one of the few trails in the park where you can see three distinct bedrock types within a mile. Discover how different rocks and soil affect plants that grow here. 1.2 miles. Total climb: about 200 ft. Meet at Timber Hollow Overlook (mile 43.3). Ride van back to cars.
Sue Schaefer and Sally Hurlbert, Park Rangers, Shenandoah National Park

Lewis Mountain Stroll

4:30 to 6 p.m. (See Saturday’s description)

Reminders!

- Wear sturdy shoes and bring water on all hikes.
- Evaluate your personal fitness and health to choose an appropriate program.
- Pets are not permitted on Wildflower Weekend walks.
- Come prepared for wet weather. Walks may be conducted in light rain, but will be canceled in case of thunderstorms.

* Indicates programs that are new this year.